

THE ACCESS KEY

President's Corner

GENERAL MEETING

SMUD BUILDING
6201 S STREET
7:30 P.M.

***** THE AGENDA *****

* * * * *

"Whatever you
want to do!"

RAFFLE:

"Your choice from the
Raffle Table"

* * * * *

Speaking of Officer's, I would like to remind you that the Club is in need of a Vice-President. I would sure like to see this position filled as soon as possible. Now is your chance to take part in Club activities and put forth your ideas. Please contact myself or one of the other officers if you are interested in the position.

Membership note: we are in need of new members. Do you know another Atari computer owner not already a member of our club? Why not bring him/her to a club meeting and get them to join? Many benefits can be shared by joining a group with common interests. What a better way to make new friends, and exchange ideas and techniques using our favorite computer?

Officer's please remember the next officer's meeting will be Wednesday evening, July 8th at my new home. I would appreciate all the officer's, including the disk librarians, to attend this meeting as we have many topics to discuss including that of the disk libraries.



WORLD OF ATARI

[The first annual "World of Atari Show" was held on June 19th and 20th at the new Convention Center in Santa Clara. Two ACCESS Key Special Correspondents attended the show, and here are their reports.]

FRIDAY, JUNE 19th

by Dave Schwartz

I attended the show on Friday along with members Kim Beattie and John Laster, and except for all the traffic coming home (it took about 4 hours), we found the day to be a very enjoyable one. Since many people had to work on Friday, there was a smaller crowd and it was easier to talk to each of the different vendors about their products and get hands-on experience.

Among those vendors in attendance were: Atari Corp, WordPerfect Corp., Hybrid Arts, Michtron, Analog/ST-LOG, ST X-PRESS, Broderbund, Activision, Cal Com Inc., Spectrum Holobyte, Computer Currents, MicroTimes, Beckeneyer Development Tools, SoftLogik Corp., California Dreams/LDW, SBT Corp., QMI, Keyboard magazine, Data Pacific, ANTIC publications, plus many dealers with plenty of bargains for all.

Among the many noteworthy events at the show were:

Atari did manage to have their Laser printer, a Mega ST-4 (4 meg version of the ST), the Atari PC clone, and the 80-column card for the 8-bit machines.

Hybrid Arts had Midi-Maze set up with 16 STs, Michtron had the laser disc/ST version of the arcade hit DRAGON'S LAIR running.

MICHTRON/Microdeal was also demonstrating and selling their brand new game, AIRBALL. This game had just been shipped to the dealers only 3 days before the show so we were among the first to view it. (It was shown at the recent CES - Consumer Electronic Show - in Chicago) This game is much like Marble Madness only with a different theme and your marble is an airball that you must continuously pump up to keep alive while traveling the more than 150 rooms.

San Jose Computers was offering a jogging/joystick for \$3.00. This was a real conversation piece. It was a large gym mat with the 4 points (left, right, up, and down) and fire button area painted on the top of the mat and a long cord that plugs into the joystick port on your computer. The idea being you can jog and keep in shape while playing your favorite game.

One surprise was that two new Infocom games were available at several of the dealer's booths before any announcement that they were in the works by Infocom; STATIONFALL (sequel to PLANETFALL) and the LURKING HORROR (a Lovecraft/Stephen King type game).

Some disappointments:

FTL did not show (everyone hoped they would have been there with the long awaited, Dungeonmaster. Also, Electronic Arts did not show (there was a booth for them, but the only thing there was their sign laying on the floor of the booth. Also, Atari Corp. did not have their Hayes compatible modem at the show.

It was very hard to keep from buying everything in sight, I managed to buy only 4 items. All in all I think everyone enjoyed themselves and look forward to many happy hours computing

SATURDAY, JUNE 20th

by Wm A. Carroll

It was a cool 51 degrees outside as I got up from my bed Saturday morning. I had been waiting for this day for weeks, not only to drive my new car, but to go to my first ATARI show. The friends that I asked to join me were already getting dressed and ready for me to pick them up - well, more or less ready. With true Atari Pole Position speed and style, we flew on down to San Jose about 45 minutes early. The stop at Denney's was a welcome relief.

We pulled into the Convention Center to find masses of Atarians filing into the large building. We paid our \$5.00 to get in and waited our turns in line. (not too long)

(Continued on next page.)

(WORLD, cont.)

Inside at last! We ran up and down the rows and rows of Atari displays trying to see it all at once, then start all over again booth by booth catching all that we could.

The first event of the day for me was to go and see Leonard Tramiel, and Neil Harris and "Zig". Zig was a strange kind of a guy. He had something like a heavy German accent, thick dark glasses like my mother used to wear, and medium length wavy gray hair. He was, as far as I could tell, the Atari Software marketing Rep. He gave us information about how and why Atari tells its users months or years in advance about up-and-coming products. Why some of them do not make it, and why some are late. He went on to say that Atari does not do this to be malicious, it is just that sometimes things do not work out.

Neil Harris took over the mike and announced that the new DS/DD 5-1/4 drive is going to be shipped within the next 30 days and the MEGA ST's are already in some stores at this time and more are on their way. He also said that the 80 column card for the 8 bit Atari users is finished and most of them are built and waiting for one last chip that is in production. He said that they could have bought the chips and put them in the cards but the price of the 80 column card would have doubled. Instead they opted to have them made at 1/2 the price and pass that savings along to use users. Neil was asked about the "TT" computers and promptly said that there was no "TT" in production or on the boards, but there was a 32 bit, 4+ meg (maybe UNIX) etc etc on the boards that, as of yet, has not been named. He said that it would be faster than a VAX system and we might look for it in a few years (Maybe).

Leonard Tramiel announced that Atari has its sights aimed right at the business market and is gearing up for an assault on it. I saw a 1040 ST hooked up to 5 other terminal screens all doing different programs all at the same time. This was just what I wanted. Leonard talked about the ads for Atari being shown at the Atari booth. There was no

mention of games on them. They were aimed right at APPLE and IBM. (1/2 the price and 3 times the memory and speed etc etc.) They were well done, and it made me proud to own a Atari. He also said that Atari will have out, in the not too distant future, a CD ROM player by Sony. All they are waiting for is the price to come down on them. The XEGS (game machine) was said to be finished and was being set for sale around Christmas. It is a 65XE board with an attachable keyboard with pastel keys. It will allow you to use carts and disks and tapes to load and run programs. Ten years ago Atari let loose the 2600 to the general public for \$150 and we are now looking at the impact of that event. What will the public be like in 10 more years after the XEGS is let loose, seeing that it is a real computer and not just a game machine? Except for this, most of Leonard's replies were "NO COMMENT". I guess that we were asking all the right questions.

After the meeting, I ran back to the show so that I would not miss anything. My first stop was to play a game on a ST. It was called "KILL A HAPPY FACE". 16 ST computers were all hooked up together and people were all in the same maze running around trying to be the first one to kill 10 other users. It was the best game that I have ever played!!! After winning 9 games in a row in record time, [!?? - Ed.] I left the others to practice for the main event at noon when we would find out who was the best of the best.

I wish that I could go booth by booth and tell you everything that was there, but that would take me days. Most of them were all centered on the new ST'S with few exceptions. Many of the local computer stores had set up for the event and you could find almost anything, including rare 5200 joystick parts. The Atari Museum was set up and we saw it all... From the 400 to the 600XL expansion box to the 1450 XLD with the XL expansion box that would have let it run APPLE II programs. 815 drives and the list goes on...

The ride back home was quiet as we thought of all the we had seen and wondered what it will be like next year.

ST SIG Report

by Dave Schwartz

The June meeting was held on Monday, June 8th. Our guest speaker was David Beckemeyer, President of Beckemeyer Development Tools. David brought his Companies entire line of software for demonstration including: AnsiTerm, a multitasking terminal emulator; USH Manager, a "Visual Shell" interface to MT C-Shell. It manages a terminal session with a GEN Desk Accessory window. He also brought his "Touch Screen" point-of-purchase display. This is a cash register custom system using a modified SC1224 color monitor. You select items you wish to order by touching the appropriate place on the screen. It then generates a list of the items you ordered and a total price. This system can be used to run a small business as it will generate many accounting reports and keep track of inventory. David told us of his background in computers, where his specialty is with the 68000 microprocessor. When the ST came out he was amazed at its price (he was buying just the 68000 microprocessor boards for around \$2,000.00). He has been supporting the ST ever since (has not worked with a MAC or AMIGA, as for now has no intention of it). He has worked on many elaborate projects such as setting up an optical disk system for the Library of Congress. Other projects have been for Companies such as Federal Express. Mostly his Company has produced large custom systems for people, but wants to now concentrate on smaller systems. It was a most interesting evening, and one of our best guest speakers.

ST DISK LIBRARY UPDATE: The following disks have been added to the disk library:

GAMES #4 (Color Only):

ST Invaders
Stone-Age Deluxe (like Boulder Dash)
DGDB (like Arcade Gauntlet)
Puzzle Squares (24 tile puzzle)

UTILITIES #12 (Color Only):

Checkbook Balancer
Star Chart Astronomy Program
Typewriter Accessory

UTILITIES #13 (Hard Disk Utilities):

Turtle Backup v. 2.15 (very fast)
Mouse Accelerator
GEMBOOT (40-folder limit fix)
IBMBOOT (Format double-sided disks to run on IBM PCs)

UTILITIES #14 (Printmaster Borders and Pictures Library)

ST-LOG Disk #14 - May 1987

GFA BASIC SIG

Anyone interested in forming a GFA BASIC SIG? This powerful programming language for the ST has become very popular, some say the "De Facto Standard". I know there are many of you who are using this language and many of you would like help with your programs. This would be a great place to get together and share ideas and programming techniques. If you are interested in leading this group, please come to the July 13th ST*SIG meeting as we will discuss the formation of this SIG as part of our GFA BASIC Night, meeting.

UPCOMING ST*SIG MEETING EVENTS:

July 13th - GFA BASIC NIGHT

This evening will be devoted to the new exciting programming language - GFA BASIC. We will see many demonstrations on what this powerful little language can do. If you have a GFA program that you personally have written, please bring it along. This will be a good time for everyone to discuss GFA in detail and share programming tips, tricks, etc.

August 10th - HOME FINANCE NIGHT

This evening will be dedicated to viewing the various packages dedicated to helping us keep our home finances in order. Among these could be: DOLLARS AND SENSE, SWIFTCALC ST, PHASER, VIP PROFESSIONAL, HOME ACCOUNTANT, etc. Bring your package to the meeting and tell the group why you love it or hate it. We'll also discuss ways to set-up a budget.

(Continued on next page.)

(STSIG, cont.)

Upcoming meetings will include: Magic Sac demo, a word processing night, a database night, and a MIDI MAZE (Kill a Happy Face) contest. If you would like to put on a demo, please contact me. We also need volunteers each meeting to bring ST equipment. The place we meet has large color monitors, so if you have a 520 with an RF modulator, all you will need to bring is the computer and disk drive(s). Please let me know if you can help out.

The ST SIG meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of each month at Sierra Hi-Tech at 10561 Old Placerville Rd., near Mather Air Force Base at 7:30p.m. Directions: Take Highway 50 to Mather Field Rd turnoff going South (towards the Air Force Base), Take a right turn at the first stop sign (Rockingham). Go about 2 blocks on Rockingham to Old Placerville Rd. and make a right turn. It will be the second building on the left.



ST ITEMS FOR SALE

Navarone TIMEKEEPER: Clock/Calendar with battery backup. Contains software disk and a thru cartridge slot to allow another cartridge to be used with the ST at the same time. \$25.00

HACKER by Activision \$20.00

BRATACCAS by Psygnosis \$15.00

GBA Championship BASKETBALL by Activision \$20.00

ST STAR RAIDERS by Atari \$15.00

ATARI ST LOGO (Hayden Books) \$6.00

THE ATARI ST USER'S GUIDE (McGraw-Hill) \$6.00

SOUND & GRAPHICS ON THE ATARI ST (Compute!) \$6.00

ELEMENTARY ST BASIC (Compute!) \$6.00

All items are in original packages with manuals and are in excellent working condition. If interested contact Dave Schwartz on ACCESS BBS or call 723-4548.



THE STANDUP ATARI

I don't get no respect. Last week a MacIntosh owner booted me up by mistake and broke the color adjustment knob trying to make the screen go monochrome. Or take my motherboard. Please! I just got into the terminal, and boy, are my jokes tired. But seriously folks....

One of the most challenging exercises for computerists is to cram as much program into as little code as possible. The Holy Grail is the one-liner. Of course, certain amenities are sacrificed. You won't find instructions in the body of the program. Or the author's byline. Mostly these programs are not user friendly. In fact, some are downright hostile. Error trapping is pretty much a foreign concept to the one-liner. As is beauty. As are bells and whistles generally. The one-liner's chief virtues are speed, simplicity, and an occasional burst of power.

Here follow my favorites, appearing together in print for the first time. The first program is really two programs, the second one being a mirror of the first. Brian Colflesh of JACS is possibly the author of this one. (Uncertain authorship of one-liners is as good as it gets. Credit gets lost quickly as a one-liner is passed from hand-to-hand.)

LISTING 1:

```
32766 FOR B=15 TO 0 STEP-0.5:POKE 769,B:
      NEXT B:RETURN
```

```
32767 FOR B=0 TO 15 STEP 0.5:POKE 769,B:
      NEXT B:RETURN
```

Of course, there are other screen fader routines around, but I've not seen one so lean and so mean. Stick one or both of these in a program and call it (them) with a GOSUB. For a fast-and-filthy look at the power of this pair, try this:

(Continued on next page.)

(ARCHIVES, cont.)

```
2 POKE 82,0:CHR$(125):POKE 710,15:
POKE 752,1:F.A=0T0439:CHR$(16);
CHR$(123)::N.A:F.C=1 TO 5
3 F.B=0T015 STEP 0.03:POKE 709,B:N.B:
F.D=1T0300:N.D:F.B=15T00 STEP-0.03:
POKE 709,B:N.B:N.C
```

LISTING 2:

```
4 OPEN#1,4,0,"D:FILENAME":X=USR(5576)
```

I first saw this gem in Antic (3/86), with no authorship credit given. Type it in. List it. Substitute the file name of a binary load program on your disk for FILENAME. Then SAVE the program, using a file name like RUNBIN.BAS, or whatever. I'm told that this particular USR call is as illegal as Billy-be-switched. But, hey! You can't have everything. It works. Now, if somebody could just come up with a good routine for breaking out of machine language programs....

LISTING 3

```
1 TRAP 1:OPEN#1,6,0,"D:*. *":DIM A$(20):
FOR J=1TO 60:INPUT#1,A$:A$=NEXT J:
CLOSE#1
```

Credit for this one may belong to John Hutchinson of the Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Atari Group. Of all the routines to list a disk directory from BASIC, this ranks as perhaps the shortest. So it ends up in a freeze. So, just press the BREAK key and be merrily on your way. Of course, one could always change the first statement to TRAP 2, delete the last command from line 1, and type in 2 CLOSE#1. But then it would no longer be a one-liner.

LISTING 4

```
5 POKE 82,0:POKE 838,166:POKE 839,238:
SE.2,1,0:SE.4,8,2:0.#1,12,0,"E":
GET#1,A:CHR$(A):G.5
```

Greg Barr of CHAOS in East Lansing, Michigan, put together this one-line word processor for the 400/800. Type in your text, using the control/arrow and other text editing keys. BUT! Resist the temptation to press RETURN until you are

ready to send text to the printer. When ready, cursor your way to the top of the screen and hold down the RETURN key, until the printer finishes. Not exactly AtariWriter or Paper Clip. It gets the SMALL jobs done, though. Which are what most of us mostly do. Don't try the above code on an XL/XE. It will only mess up your computer's brain. If you own one of these newer models, you can change the 838 and 839 POKEs in the above listing to POKE 838,202 and POKE 839,254. It should work just fine. There are escape sets to return you to screen output. For the 400/800, POKE 838,163:POKE 839,246 will get you out; on the XL/XE line, POKE 838,175:POKE 839,242 will do it.

LISTING 5:

```
7 I.A:B=B+A:?:A,B:G.7
```

This one is also from Greg Barr. It's a checkbook blancer. If you want to send the results to a printer, try this:

```
8 I.A:B=B+A:?:A,B:LP.A,B:G.8
```

Begin by entering your starting balance. At the prompt (?) enter your first transaction amount, preceded by a minus (-) for a check or withdrawal or no sign for a deposit. Don't use dollar signs.

All of the preceding is a sneaky commercial for the new ACCESS \$1 (8-bit) club disk: Miscellaneous #6, which has 120 short routines and programs - including the five listed above - on a double-sided package. Only \$6.00, or a nickel a program. Such a deal.



CORRECTION

In the listing of the C function, convert() [ACCESS Key, June 1987, p. 11], line 60 should read:

```
60 return ((c & 0x9F) | 1u[index]);
```




At a recent board meeting, I was asked what is it that the APESIG does? The answer is that the APESIG encompasses a broader range of interest than when it began. Someone suggested that one of its main goals had developed into the task of eliminating the bugs that creep into the programs that I work on. Not true! Bugs don't creep into my programs. They leap in with all six little feet tenaciously dug in.

Of course the APESIG does more than assist in eliminating bugs in a program here and there. Kim Beattie offered to give his concept of what the APESIG is at this time, and the following text is what he submitted to me. He refers to the APESIG as the Programmers' SIG. A name change at this time may be a necessity, since the original objectives of our group have changed.

The ACCESS PROGRAMMERS' SIG

BY KIM BEATTIE

The Programmers' SIG is a group of individuals brought together by a common interest in programming computers. The primary focus of this group is on the Atari 8-bit computer; to a lesser extent, the new ST machine is also being explored.

The purpose of this group is to provide an open forum for the discussion of computer programming. In addition to general theory and technique, specific problems are discussed, analyzed and (hopefully) solved.

The Programmers' SIG is different from other SIGs in that we normally do not work together as a group. Rather, we tend to break up into smaller groups, with each group discussing or working on specific topics of interest. This is why our meetings may seem a little disorganized to the new member or visitor. Usually, the topic that each group explores is not directly related to that of other groups. The make-up of

these groups can, and often does, vary from meeting to meeting. Occasionally, we will engage in a group discussion on a topic of mutual interest.

The Programmers' SIG is not an instructional SIG; a lot can be learned at our meetings, but it is not our intention or goal to teach programming to anyone. We expect that anyone attending a meeting knows some programming and wants to learn more. We learn together, by doing.

The language of choice for most of our members is Atari Basic or one of its variants (BASIC XL, BASIC XE AND TURBO BASIC). We also have members interested in "C", ACTION!, and assembly/machine language programming. ST members are currently concentrating on GFA BASIC.

From the beginner to the expert, all programmers are welcome to join our group. All we ask is that you have a desire to learn and a willingness to share what you already know.

* * *

What Kim said in the above paragraphs is an accurate description of what one of our meetings is like. They can be interesting, informative and fun.

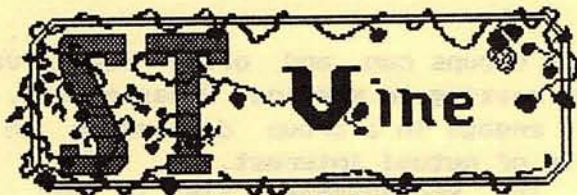
A change of subject that may interest some of our 8-bit users is that there are some new disks in the 8-bit library. Five double sided educational disks from a group in Mendocino will be available at the next meeting. We have also added UltraFont from Antic, August 1986, to the back side of Character Utilities #1.

The Mendocino disks consist of quizzes on the following topics.

1. Punctuation
2. Capitalization
3. Birthplaces of Civilizations
4. The Greek World
5. The Roman World
6. The Changing Earth
7. Water, Waves and Wind
8. The New Frontier, Space
9. Rocks and Minerals

There is also a flash spelling tutor included in this group.





by Dave Schwartz
& Kim Beattie

The latest word from ATARI Corp. is that the XEP-80 (80 column card for the 8-bit), and the SX212 (1200 baud modem) are scheduled for delivery at the end of June (by the time you are reading this). The MEGA ST2 and ST4 (2 meg and 4 meg STs) are already being shipped to Europe and should be available here in early July. The ATARI PC is also due in early July. The blitter chip seems to be plagued with problems, but should be available around September. Cost of upgrade to current ST owners is estimated at about \$120.00. Atari attended the NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) Show at the end of June. This would make ATARI the first Computer manufacturer to attend a NAMM show. ATARI says "We want to own the MIDI market". They may soon do that as many music stores around the country are now carrying the STs.

ST MAGAZINES

At the risk of making of making 8-bit owners green with envy, do you realise just how many ST only oriented magazines are out there? Here's a list: START, ST-LOG, COMPUTE! ST, ST APPLICATIONS, ST BUSINESS, ST WORLD, ST INFORMER, and ST X-PRESS. Eight, count 'em eight! Did I miss any? (And that's only the magazines published in the U.S.A.) ST X-PRESS, ST APPLICATIONS and ST-LOG all now have monthly GFA BASIC columns. It's really good to see so much interest in the ST. If this many companies are willing to invest time and money into the ST, it can only be good for all of us ST owners. It certainly adds to the visibility of the ST as a computer!

This may be old news by the time this is published, but here are some details on the new Atari Laser printer due out soon: A full 300 dpi output that matches the quality of other laser printers on the market. It can be used

with any ST; the 520 and 1040 can be used in Diablo mode (letter quality printer) for most word processors. Any ST with 2 or more MEG of memory can become a full page graphic printer. Of course the price, while being the lowest priced laser printer on the market, is still a little steep for most of us. About \$1500!

The ST "Desktop Publishing" market is heating up. First there was PUBLISHING PARTNER, and then came FLEET STREET WRITER. By the end of the year we should see packages from TIMEWORKS (PAGE PUBLISHER) and MANHATTEN GRAPHICS has announced that their popular MAC program, READY SET GO will be made available for the ST.

The following software titles were announced at the summer CES. Let's hope the majority of these reach the shelves...

BRODERBUND: Art/Film Director, Karateka, Print Shop.

ELECTRONIC ARTS: The Bard's Tale, Autoduel, Ring Quest, Movie Maker, Ultima III & IV

EPYX: Spy vs Spy III, Boulder Dash Construction Set, Sub Battle Simulator

MICROPROSE: Gunship

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE: Orbiter, PT 109

SSI: The Wrath of Nikadewus (Phantasie III), Rings of Zilfin, Wizard's Crown, Shard of Spring

TIMEWORKS: Word Writer (2.0), Partner ST, Page Publisher

The latest version of ProCopy (1.40) has been out since May. In addition to everything else it does, ProCopy can now backup GOLDRUNNER, ARTICFOX, and TRIMBASE.

Still waiting for autoboot software for your Atari Hard disk? I told you to buy a Supra! Supra's have been autobooting for months now. If you are still hoping for autoboot software for

(Continued on next page.)

(STUINE, cont.)

the Atari, you're in luck. Send \$19.95 to Supra and get a set of Supra utilities designed for the Atari Hard drive, including autobooting. I've read that the Supra utilities are far superior to Atari's.

The new version of Flight Simulator II now supports the joystick. When Sublogic fixed the bugs that surfaced in the original release they added the joystick routines. Send your disk back to Sublogic and it will be updated... for FREE!

The new revised version of OSS PERSONAL PASCAL is almost ready for release. The new version has a number of new features that enhance the original version. The "shell" program has been expanded and offers new options like PATH (specify where the program looks for the different files). The editor will be GEM based and is all new. The compiler will now allow arrays and records to be up to 16 megabytes(!) in size. READ and WRITE will now work with any kind of file. Also, TURBO compatible screen procedures and been added.

As usual much (most?) of this information comes from shifting through the many newsletters we receive every month. To all the newsletters that we pulled info out of this month (Pacus Report, CAUG FOCUS, and MAN), thanks for digging up the details. Keep up the good work.

WHAT'S NEW?

INFOCOM has two new adventures out: THE LURKING HORROR, a text adventure (of course!) based on the Lovecraft horror stories. Looks neat! STARFALL is a sequel to the popular PLANETFALL. Once again you are teamed up with Floyd. Sure to be fun!

The QMI DeskCart has finally arrived and it was worth the wait! (Watch for a review in a future issue in which I sing the praises of this wonderful ST addition.)

Michtron has released the following new products: GOLDRUNNER, ST-REPLAY (a

sound digitizer), and SUPER CONDUCTOR (professional 16 track MIDI sequencing package), and AIRBALL. Forget about MARBLE MADNESS. AIRBALL is the Marble Madness of the ST. (Sorry EA, but you blew it! You snooze, you loose!) The graphics are awesome! (I hate using that word, but if the shoe fits...)

Timeworks has released Word Writer 2.0. This version includes a Mail Merge capability, a personal expandable dictionary and a thesaurus. With these additions Word Writer now becomes the best word processor for the ST in the under \$100 price range. It offers everything most folks will need in a word processor. Buy WORD PERFECT if you need its advanced features, but Word Writer 2.0 is the word processor for the rest of us! Owners of version 1.0 can upgrade for \$19.70. A fair deal for all the added features.

Electronic Arts is reportedly putting the finishing touches on THE BARD'S TALES. They are also working on DELUXE PAINT and PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET. There is also a slight chance that M.U.L.E. may be ported over to the ST.

California Dreams (Logical Design Works, Inc.) has announced VEGAS GAMBLER. This contains four popular casino games: Slot Machine, Blackjack, Poker, and Roulette. The graphics are absolutely Beautiful and the animation was very realistic. I had the opportunity to try this one out at the recent World of Atari Show.

SBT Corp. has announced release of their Database Accounting Library for the ST. These include: dProject, dMaterials, dPayables, dPurchase, dPayroll, dInvoice/dStatements, dProfessional, dASSETS, dORDERS, and dProperty.

Other new titles on local shelves: HARDBALL, 221 B BAKER STREET (Sherlock Holmes comes to the ST!), SUBMARINE BATTLE SIMULATOR, MASTERPLAN (another ST spreadsheet...), TACKLE BOX (everything the PERSONAL PASCAL owner/programmer needs), SUPERBASE PERSONAL (another relational database), GFA VECTOR (making a good thing better!), and WORD WRITER ST 2.0 (the word processor for the rest of us...).

ZOOMRACKS II

Reviewed by Kim Beattie

The April 1986 issue of THE ACCESS KEY had a review of a database program for the ST, named ZOOMRACKS. Now, a year later, ZOOMRACKS II is available for the ST. ZOOMRACKS II is the same ZOOMRACKS with a couple of added features.

First, a recap of what ZOOMRACKS (I & II) is. ZOOMRACKS is a database program with a unique twist. The database information is organized as cards in a rack with the top line of each card showing (see the card rack next to the time clock as an example). There can be up to nine racks in memory at one time and it is easy to move between them. Each rack can "... hold thousands of cards, and each card can have up to 27 fields. Each field can contain up to 250 lines of 80 characters per line." Plenty of room for most needs.

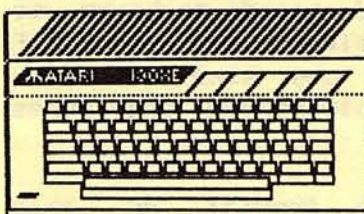
Beneath the unique concept of card racks, ZOOMRACKS remains a database with most of the features we would expect in a database. Sorting, searching, and report generating capabilities are all here. In addition to these features ZOOMRACKS has a few extras not found in most databases. ZOOMRACKS offers many of the features of a text processor including word wrap, and cut and paste functions. Because you don't define field lengths, it's possible to have large text entries in the database and not worry about running out of room.

There are two new sets of features included in ZOOMRACKS II. First, ZRII allows you to have multiple output forms and cut, copy and replace them. The output features of ZOOMRACKS II are much more flexible and complete than ZRI. You are no longer limited to 11" pages. Mailing labels can now be done with ZRII. The second new and very powerful feature is the ability to save racks of macros (as many racks of macros as you like). One feature that was not added to ZOOMRACKS II was GEM. It is still a IBM, keyboard oriented program. The mouse can be used to select menu items, but the other features of GEM are missing. ZOOMRACKS II would benefit greatly from drop-down menus. There are many menus in ZOOMRACKS and a 20% of the screen (at least) is devoted to the menus. If these

were drop down menus, the user could have more screen room to view records.

But the lack of a GEM interface does not really hurt ZOOMRACKS II. It is still a unique and powerful database program. But don't take my word for it, try it out! There is a copy of the ZOOMRACKS II demo in the club ST library. This demo is a full working version with the only limitation being a maximum of twenty cards per rack. Part of the demo is a tutorial macro that will take you on a tour of ZOOMRACKS and show you all of its features. It gives you the chance to really put ZOOMRACKS through its paces and see if it's what you want or need. How many other programs give you that kind of opportunity?

Personally, I prefer a more standard database, but if you're in the market for a database, you should give ZOOMRACKS II a look. You might see something you like.



8-Bits & Pieces

by Kim Beattie

It looks like some companies are still supporting the 8-bit machine, but it also looks like that despite its power and versatility, the only way the 8-bit will survive is as a "game machine." Even Atari, with the introduction of the 65XE game system at CES, has decided that the game market is the only viable market for 8-bit line of machines. Any support is better than no support, right? What does this mean? It means that the 8-bit line will continue to see some commercial support and that you, the 8-bit owner will not own an orphan computer. As long as Atari continues to manufacture and sell the 65XE (and 130XE?) there will be somebody who will program for it. (And there will always be at least one place you can send your computer to get it fixed!)

On the other hand, if the new game machine system sells well, I suppose it's possible that the Atari 8-bit machine

(Continued on next page.)

(8-BITS, cont.)

will find it's way into more homes than any other computer! While the commercial companies churn out game after game, it will be the individual programmer working at home that will supply the programs that prove the 8-bit is a "real" computer. There are many good (i.e., commercial quality) programs already available for the 8-bit in the public domain; EXPRESS!, SUPERKEY, TEXTPRO, and DAISY DOT just to name a few. They maybe far and few between, but some of the best programs available for the Atari 8-bit have been written since the introduction of the ST!

The 65XE game machine announced at CES has a detachable keyboard, and includes MISSILE COMMAND in ROM, FLIGHT SIMULATOR II (in a 128K cartridge), and a game to use the light gun that comes with the new machine.

The following software titles were announced at the summer CES for the Atari 8-bit:

AVALON HILL: Clear for Action, Combat Chess

ELECTRONIC ARTS: Moebius, Ultima I (enhanced)

EPYX: Spy vs Spy III, Boulder Dash Construction Set(!)

MICROPROSE: Pirates!

SSI: The Eternal Dagger

Let's hope some of these actually make to the dealer's shelves. (Especially the Boulder Dash Construction Set!)

There are some new programs on local shelves: BATTLECRUISER, GUDERIAN, REBEL AT CHICAMAUGA, AWARDWARE, BOP 'N WRESTLE, TRAIL BLAZER, and CYCLE KNIGHT. Some 8-bit programs I'd LIKE to see on local shelves are NEWS STATION, PUBLISHING PRO, and NEWS STATION COMPANION (all by Reeve Software).

As we all know, the 80-column card and 1200 bps modem will be out "real soon now..." The latest date given by Atari is late summer (this year?). The 3.5" drive is dead, and now Atari will release a new 5.25" double-sided, real double-density drive, called the XF551. The new drive will be out...uh, real soon...

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* * * * *

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ST SIG 10 August
(Call Dave at 723-4548)
T SIG: 4 August
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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 31 July

GENERAL MEETINGS: 22 July, 26 Aug
23 Sept, 28 Oct

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